



*Nourishing the fitrah of each unique child*

## Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Policy

Updated: January 2025	Review date: January 2026	Coordinator: School Administrator
--------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------------------------



## Control Of Substances Hazardous To Health (COSHH) Policy

At Unique Academy, we understand the importance of protecting the health and safety of all our employees and pupils. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended 2009), states that every employer should prevent the exposure of substances hazardous to health, to their employees. Where exposure cannot be prevented, employers should ensure that the exposure is adequately controlled, through the use of risk assessments and appropriate control measures.

In accordance with these regulations, the school has created this policy to ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities for preventing ill health as a result of hazardous substances, and that adequate control measures are implemented and monitored at our school.

### Aims

The main aims of this policy are:

- To assess the risk of hazardous substances used in our school and the impact they may have on health.
- To implement appropriate control measures in order to manage identified risks.
- To regularly monitor control measures and ensure that they are adequate, including the review of control equipment.
- To regularly monitor the extent to which staff and pupils are exposed to hazardous substances and conduct health surveillance where necessary.
- To provide training for members of staff on the hazards, risks and precautions needed for effective control.

This policy is applicable to all full-time, part-time and supply staff, pupils, contractors, volunteers and work placement students.

### Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to the related statutory legislation, including but not limited to the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

This policy will also have due regard to the following guidance: HSE 'COSHH: A brief guide to the regulations' 2005.

The school will implement this policy in conjunction with our Health and Safety Policy.

### Definitions

#### ***Hazardous substances:***

For the purpose of this policy, a hazardous substance is a substance which may cause ill health if inhaled, ingested, injected or absorbed through the skin, or as a result of being released into the surrounding environment.

There are many examples of hazardous substances which can cause ill health, including:

- Substances used directly in activities, e.g. cleaning agents, adhesives and paints.
- Substances generated from activities, e.g. fumes.
- Naturally occurring substances, e.g. grain dust.
- Biological agents such as bacteria and other microorganisms.

### **Health surveillance:**

For the purpose of this policy, health surveillance is a system of ongoing health checks for employees, in order to provide data to help employers evaluate health risks and highlight concerns in workplace control measures.

Health checks are for employees who are regularly exposed to noise, vibrations, solvents, fumes, biological agents and hazardous substances.

### **Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS):**

For the purpose of this policy, an “MSDS” is a document which provides important health and safety information regarding a substance. This is provided by the supplier or manufacturer, and indicates whether a substance is classified as hazardous.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, as well as the necessary control measures they need to undertake.
- Ensuring that members of staff receive effective COSHH training.
- Ensuring that, where possible, the use of hazardous substances is avoided.
- Conducting risk assessments where the use of hazardous substances cannot be avoided and ensuring effective control measures are in place.
- Providing less harmful alternatives, where possible, for hazardous substances which must be used.
- Ensuring that an up-to-date record is kept of all hazardous substances which are used in the school, and that these are clearly labelled.
- Providing safe storage and disposal arrangements for hazardous substances.
- Purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE), ensuring that this is regularly reviewed, is of an appropriate standard and in line with the Health and Safety Policy.
- Ensuring that health surveillance is undertaken where necessary.
- Conducting an assessment of the health risks to all those at our school.
- Preventing and controlling the exposure of hazardous substances.
- Ensuring the proper use of controls are adopted.
- Ensuring that the controls used are necessary, safe and regularly reviewed.
- Conducting health surveillance for staff where necessary.
- Providing instruction, information and training on the use of hazardous substances.

Other **staff members** are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with this policy and the procedures they must follow.
- Using all hazardous substances in accordance with the risk assessments conducted prior to use and the manufacturer’s instructions, including the required control measures.
- Using PPE when necessary and reporting any damage to the school administrator/site manager immediately.
- Attending COSHH training sessions.
- Making themselves available for any health surveillance
- Communicating the procedures and control measures to pupils.

## **COSHH Procedures**

In order for the school to be compliant with the COSHH regulations, we recognise the important procedures which need to be followed to ensure effective provision of COSHH at our school.

The school will dedicate itself to adhering to the following procedures for every hazardous substance used:

### **Assessing the risks to staff and pupils:**

- Prior to use, the class teacher will conduct a risk assessment, taking into account the possible hazards that may occur as a result of using the substance.
- In all instances, the potential risks must be considered and whether the use of the hazardous substance is important to the learning experience, e.g. pupils come into contact with hazardous substances in science lessons, as in line with the national curriculum.
- The risk assessment will detail the appropriate control measures that must be taken when using the substance.
- The procedures and hazards identified in the risk assessment will be communicated to the required staff, who must then communicate this to all those involved and ensure it is adhered to.
- Copies of the risk assessment will be given to the relevant members of staff. Copies will also be kept in the COSHH file for re-use, training and staff induction purposes.
- Risk assessments will also be carried out for exposure to biological agents, e.g. vomit, blood, etc.
- All risk assessments will be authorised by the Headteacher prior to the activity.

### **Control measures:**

- The school will eliminate the use of any hazardous substances unless absolutely necessary.
- All pupils will be fully aware of safety procedures and extra caution shall be taken when using any hazardous substances involved in teaching, for instance in science lessons.
- Where substances must be used, the COSHH coordinator will aim to substitute this for a less harmful substance in order to minimise risks.
- Where the substance cannot be eliminated or substituted, the amount of time for exposure will be minimised. The amount of the substance used will also be reduced as much as possible.
- Where possible, the use of the substance will be in isolation from other areas of the school to prevent exposure to others.
- Appropriate ventilation will be used, such as opening windows and external doors.
- Appropriate PPE will be worn by all those exposed to the substance such as gloves, safety goggles, dust masks, etc.
- When pupils are using a hazardous substance, at least two members of staff shall be present in order to supervise pupils and in the case of an emergency.
- Hazardous substances will be stored safely and securely, and can be found in the storage room.
- All substances will be safely disposed of after use by staff that are trained in COSHH.
- Only staff trained in COSHH will have access to the substances. At no time will pupils be able to access the substances.
- All substances shall be locked away, out of sight and reach of pupils, with only appropriate members of staff having approved access.
- The school will follow the emergency procedure detailed in this policy.
- The school administrator will ensure that these control measures are adequately monitored and maintained.
- Staff will be aware that they must report any defect in control measures to the COSHH coordinator immediately so that replacements can be provided.
- All concerns regarding COSHH will be handled with the utmost importance and priority.

### **Health surveillance:**

- In accordance with COSHH regulations, the school will conduct health surveillance in the following instances:
  - Where an individual is exposed to a substance which is associated with a disease or adverse health effect.
  - Where an individual is exposed to a substance which is likely to result in a disease or adverse health effect.
  - Where an individual displays signs of a disease or adverse health effect.
- Health surveillance will be conducted by the Headteacher, who will obtain all information of the individual's health and keep a written record of this. Records must be kept for a minimum of 40 years from the last entry.
- The individual will be able to access their health records at any time they should request it.

- All individuals at the school have a responsibility to provide honest and true health information, and declare any changes to their health that should occur due to the exposure of a hazardous substance.

### Planning for accidents, incidents and emergencies

- The school will aim to effectively manage every identified risk that is involved with the use of a hazardous substance; however, we recognise that there may be instances when accidents, such as spillages, could occur and may be damaging to an individual's health.
- A detailed emergency plan will be established prior to the use of any substance by the headteacher as part of the risk assessment, who is responsible for communicating this to all those involved with the use of the substance.
- The COSHH risk assessment and the MSDS for each hazardous substance will be kept in the COSHH file so that all are aware of the emergency procedures and first aid.
- Incidents will be responded to promptly, and the harmful effects will be minimised where possible.
- Emergency services will be contacted immediately where the incident cannot be resolved by a trained member of staff.
- Only members of staff trained in COSHH and first aid should attempt to provide appropriate treatment for the individual.
- Any accidents that occur should be reported to the headteacher immediately, using an Accident Reporting Form, which is available from the office.
- The emergency procedure will be regularly practised as part of a 'safety drill' method, to ensure all individuals at the school are aware of the steps that must be followed.

### Training of staff

- The Headteacher will conduct training for staff on a termly basis and will ensure that all staff are aware of:
  - The names of the substances they work with and could be exposed to, as well as the associated risks and the use of MSDS.
  - The appropriate precautions and control measures that they are expected to take to protect themselves, pupils and others at the school.
  - The importance of PPE and how this should be used.
  - The results of any exposure and health surveillance, whilst maintaining confidentiality and not revealing any identities.
  - The correct measures taken when supervising pupils who are handling substances.
  - The emergency procedures which need to be followed.
- Training will also be conducted in response to any changes required to the provision of COSHH, e.g. additional information required on risk assessments, new PPE equipment, etc.

### Monitoring and review

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher.
- An annual audit will be conducted to review:
  - All hazardous substances being used, stored, or transported have been assessed in relation to their MSDS, and are recorded on the COSHH register.
  - The COSHH register does not contain any substances which are no longer used, or are out-of-date.
  - The storage of hazardous substances is safe and secure, and all are clearly labelled.
  - The appropriate control measures are employed as required.
  - The practice of health surveillance, and how and where it is carried out, e.g. in a science lesson.
  - The emergency procedures in place are followed and are functional.